

The Observer

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photo by Marty Costello

My Jenny Jones Experience

by DeAnn Hazzard

After an hour and a half of sitting in a crowded room of strangers, my initial excitement was fading fast. By now I had heard the theme song way too many times, and I stopped speculating what the topic was going to be. I pretty much just wanted to get the show on the road...the show by the way is Jenny Jones, one of the many talk shows people can humiliate their family, friends, neighbors, or themselves for the sake of a laugh, a date or the ever sought after five minutes of fame.

I'm not putting down talk shows because well, I do watch them. I tune into to see how shocking and off the wall they can be, and maybe I've even yelled at the guests from the comforts of my room, maybe. Anyway, so now I'm on the other side of the TV as an audience member waiting patiently to hear the announcement of the topic for the show from the host herself in a chair of

a studio that looks way bigger on TV while the bright lights are drying my eyes out and the stage is overrun by frantic people. They had already hinted that it was about a conflict...that's putting it mildly. It was a bizarre feud among members of a warped family. Basically, it fulfilled the shock quota for the day.

So for an hour or so, this family screamed at one another while a couple hundred strangers watched, commented and asked questions, and well, it was weird. At home on my TV, these people were just strangers, but now with them right in front of me I sort of felt like I was eavesdropping or invading their privacy, not to mention that I was paranoid that I was going to do something stupid when the camera was on me. All and all it was an interesting experience, but as far as my talk show watching days go, I think I'll spend them in front of my TV and not in front of the cameras.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

On behalf of the library, we would like to publicly thank the Student Association for its very generous donation of \$7000 to the library materials budget. The positive impact of this gift will have an enduring effect on library services. The money will permit us to acquire resources that otherwise would not be part of the collection and make them available for use by faculty and students ~~in the future~~ and well after the current students have graduated.

We want to express our admiration for the leadership role that Student Association officers and members have taken regarding academic pursuits on our campus. We are aware that different decisions could have been made regarding the use of the money, but the members of the Student Association obviously believe strongly that financial support of the library, while not their responsibility, is extremely important.

We want to express our special thanks to Jeff Kirch who has been very informative and helpful with this project.

We greatly appreciate the support of the Student Association and look forward to all the new and useful resources acquired through your gift.

Sincerely,

Cathy Salyers
Library Director

Jody Taylor Watkins
Assistant Librarian

Downsizing fever hits SJC

by Klaudia Janek

We have all heard that the College is having some financial troubles. SJC has been trying to get its enrollment up for the past several years with limited success. Costs for students are high and so are costs for the College. Well, like any other business, Saint Joseph's has been forced to look at ways it could be more efficient and run things at a lower cost.

Now, the College is looking into being more cost efficient in areas like Dining Services, Janitorial, Maintenance, and the Lawn Shop. The Administration has brought consultants on campus to get advice on whether or not it would be cheaper to contract out these areas to larger corporations.

If SJC decided to contract, it might mean that the people working in these departments now will lose their jobs. Think about it, some of these people have worked for the College for the past 12 years and now they face the threat of losing their jobs.

I would like to think that the people who clean and take care of our dorms, care about us. Every morning when I wake up, Traci, our cleaning lady, is always there to say good morning. She knows all of our names and I'm sure the rest of the cleaning staff know their students' names. But the College does not care to realize this and is only concerned with cutting costs.

Well, I would like to offer an alternative to contracting. Why don't

we evaluate those members of our community who pull in a six-figure salary? Let's take a couple thousand out of their paychecks and put it back into the College. At least their families won't face the threat of losing health insurance and trying to find another job in Rensselaer (they are pretty sparse around here).

How much money are we actually going to save by contracting out? I doubt we're talking about major savings. The people who might lose their jobs make around the minimum wage. It's not like the College pays them \$30 an hour or anything.

Those people earning a six figure salary can re-evaluate the criteria that determines how much *they* make. For example, let's look at some type of profit sharing system. The harder the Higher-Up's work and get more money and students to the College, then the more they could pay themselves. It is a perfect and efficient way to get things moving around here.

I think that as a Christian Community we should care about what decisions our Administration makes. We should set an example and start taking into consideration the individuals who are a part of our community. Just because they are on the low pay end of the scale, does not mean they should be the first ones to go.

P.S. I'm willing to let any member of the Administration borrow my Core 1 book Economic Justice For All...it was required reading for us...



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Letters must be between 350-500 words. They must be signed and include a telephone number. If the author of the letter does not want his/her name used, include a pseudonym to be printed. The Editorial Board can elect not to print a letter that conflicts with or violates the newspaper Editorial Policy or College Doctrine. Editors reserve the right to edit letters for length. Letters can be emailed to Klaudia Janek or dropped off in our mailbox in the Core Building.

Class takes on restoration project

by Erin Breetzke

Tearing out shrubs, bushes and trees took a lot of hard work from students in the Environmental Systems class. Headed by Drs. Brodman and Olson, this class took on a prairie restoration project near Lake Banet beginning the week of November 18.

Senior Christie McCoy briefly explained that a prairie restoration project is "the replacing of non-native plants with native grasses."

Lake Banet is not a natural lake. It is a closed gravel quarry filled with water from the local water table.

"The mining and expansion of the quarry inhibited the progression of the prairie which made it susceptible to invading plants and unwanted weeds," explained junior Becky Fogg.

The human interference in the area disturbed the natural balance of the land and created a great opportunity to try to restore part of the natural prairie.



Dr. Brodman and students clear trees in preparation for reseeding.

Vigil held for homeless children

by Ashley Pierce

The annual Nationwide Candlelight Vigil for Homeless Kids was held on December 4 in the Saint Joseph's College Chapel.

Besides SJC's Chapel, there were ten other locations across the United States which participated in the candlelight vigil. The event at Saint Joseph's was sponsored by Covenant House.

In many of the "big city"

vigils, several corporations and celebrities were involved.

"People such as Whoopi Goldberg, Maya Angelou, Gloria Estefan, and others were invited to the Times Square celebration," noted Brother Tim Hemm.

At the national level, the vigil tried to identify role models for kids at risk, such as a community leader, corporation or individual and to acknowledge them for their achievements.

Students participate in Model UN

by Becky Johnson and Klaudia Janek

This year's Model United Nations Security Council Conference was held at Butler University on the weekend of Nov. 7, 8, and 9.

Model United Nations is a chance for students to take on the role of the actual United Nations. Participants spend several months researching the history, current events, and political trends of the country they represent.

Three delegations

VP of Business Affairs resigns

by Julia Garcia

Recently, David Sokol resigned from his position as Vice-President of Business Affairs at Saint Joseph's College.

"As SJC was restructuring the office, we determined that we needed someone with some different skills than those possessed by Mr. Sokol," stated President Shannon.

Both the College and Sokol mutually agreed that this would be the best career move for Sokol. Shannon has provided Sokol with positive references for future jobs.

Sokol showed his dedication to SJC throughout his years of service. He was instrumental in engineering the bond issue for the Core Building. In addition, Sokol "assisted us in a new investment policy for our endowment," said Shannon.

The other vice-presidents of the college have taken on the responsibilities of the Vice-President of Business Affairs until the position is filled.

The administration hopes to fill the position within a few weeks.



photo courtesy of Jennifer Abbassi

Model UN delegates: (l-r) Front: Peg McLeish, Sarah Klusek, Klaudia Janek; Back: Jason Deerwester, Rachel Hempel

represented Saint Joseph's this year: Sarah Klusek, Honduras; Klaudia Janek and Rachel Hempel, United Kingdom; Jason Deerwester and Peg McLeish, Poland.

The topics up for discussion this year were Iraq, Bosnia, and Chechnya.

"We met for one and a half months in preparation for the conference," said Dr. Jennifer Abbassi. It took a long time for students to prepare, but it was well worth it. "We were ready for just

about any country and topic," said Hempel.

McLeish and Deerwester won the Best Delegation award, while Hempel and Janek received 1st runner up for Best Delegation.

Hempel stated, "It is an overwhelming amount of work to participate in this event. It was a very long weekend. But you do learn a lot, so it was worth the work. The hardest thing is learning to compromise."

New clubs offered on campus

By John Osborne

A common complaint heard from the students of Saint Joseph's is that there is nothing to do on campus. This year two new clubs have sprung up that offer students a chance to have some fun and voice their opinions.

The Chess Club, led by Steve Giles, meets every Wednesday night at 9:00 in Gallagher's first floor lounge. The meetings consist of playing games of chess and discussing the possibilities of competing with other colleges.

"Our attendance has been a little inconsistent, but at times we have fifteen or sixteen people a night," said Giles.

Last month the Student Senate accepted Giles's request for membership, so the Chess Club is now officially part of Saint

Joseph's College. With that formality out of the way, Giles said he would eventually like to have a campus-wide tournament.

Senior Ryan Koppelman is the president of the Philosophy Club. At present they have ten to twelve regulars, of which only five are Philosophy majors. Koppelman stressed this point and wanted students to know that all subjects are up for discussion. In the first two meetings, gay rights and capital punishment were debated.

"In class you get talked to about it [philosophy], but you don't get a chance to talk about your own opinions. It is a good chance to bring up your own concerns, and gives students the opportunity to speak and defend themselves publicly," said Koppelman.

The battle continues in the aisles of toy stores

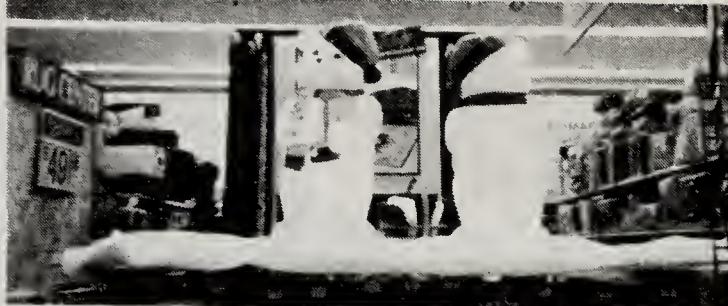


photo by Marty Costello

Christmas fever hits stores in town.

by Heidi Jugovic

Christmas arrives heralded by the usual signs: snow-covered trees, Christmas lights, carolers, smiling faces beaming good will...and parents scrapping it out in stores across the country for the latest rage in toys. The commercialism of Christmas has begun.

I'm not complaining, because I will enjoy seeing what Santa Claus has left under the tree for this good girl ("But I have been good! Really I have!"), and I will enjoy giving gifts to my friends and family. Commercial or not, I love Christmas.

But when the local news says, "Would you push down another person to get a Tickle Me Elmo? Our story at nine,"

things have gone too far.

A Tickle Me Elmo is a stuffed toy that laughs and then shakes convulsively when you touch it, and people are fighting in the aisles to get one. Since I started to research this story, the toy has been on the news no less than three times. Is Elmo a news-worthy story? You decide.

Tickle Me Elmo is only one craze of many to hit shoppers this year. The merchandise for the latest Disney movie, Toy Story, is very popular. Buzz Lightyear is almost as scarce as Elmo. Also, the latest collectible Barbie is selling off the shelves. And the newest Nintendo and the games for it are in high demand. Other popular items

include Space Jam merchandise

The press is having a field day with stories of shopping mania, but this phenomenon is hardly new. Writer Jo Eilen Meyers of the Indianapolis Star published a front-page article about two weeks ago called, "Where's Elmo? Holiday Shopping is No Laughing Matter to Parents Battling for Hot-selling Toys." Meyers highlighted hot toys from the past, including the notorious Cabbage Patch Kids (1983), Teddy Ruxpin (1985), the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (1988), and the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers (1994). Each sparked a shopping craze of its own.

To find out about the toys this generation of college kids grew up with, I talked with about two dozen SJC students and asked them what kinds of toys they had as kids.

Between the eleven women who admitted to owning Cabbage Patch Kids, there is a total of 46 dolls and an assortment of accessories. The largest number owned by one person was 18.

Seven men owned in excess of 270 G.I. Joe figures between them, in addition to numerous accessories and vehicles. The largest single collection was in excess of 60 figures.

Some other chart toppers for individual ownership:

-5 Care Bears-40 Transformers-the entire Stars Wars figure collection-20 Barbies-all of the My Little Ponies-the entire Strawberry Shortcake collection-15 He-Man figures-75 matchbox cars-and all 5 lions to make the main Voltron figure.

I also asked what toy was the one they had wanted most. Julia Gracia, Manda Hollis, and Sara Klocek, all juniors, wanted Easy Bake Ovens and never got them. Erin Breetzke asked for the Thumper Toy but never received it. Stephanie Witkemper asked for a little video camera and got it.

Matt Jenks wanted the Cobra Terror Dome but was denied. Mika Stoker asked for a huge stuffed bear and got it. Marco Maggiore asked for the Intelevision video game and got it. Sandy Price always asked for a puppy but never got it. Chad Pulver asked for the Star Wars Ton-Ton and found it under the tree. Megan Kolaczyk begged for a Ronald McDonald doll but didn't get it until her sister finally bought it for her when she was 17.

Becky Rounds got her Christmas wish - Baby Beth and the Snoopy Snow Cone

Maker. Vanessa Sobolewski always asked for Barbie dolls and accessories and got them, but she was refused Play-Doh factories when she broke the ones she already had and ate the Play-Doh.

The ones who were denied their favorite toy were no different than the ones who got them. They seemed just fine despite their tragic disappointment, although I personally believe that getting turtle necks instead of Strawberry Shortcake dolls one Christmas permanently scarred me.

Let's face it, toys are a big part of childhood, and if the headlines and news stories are any indications, toys will be a big part of our futures for us who go on to become parents. Why do parents get up in the wee hours of the morning to stand in front of stores for a single toy? Why are we likely to do so as well in the future?

My guess is that some parents remember how happy toys made them as children and how sad they were when they didn't find that favorite toy under the tree. People will do a lot to make their kids happy and to give them the childhood they wished they had had, even if toys don't appear to be a life or death matter.

So if, one day, you find yourself struggling in a toy store for the last What's-Its-Name, or if you have already done that, don't feel too badly. You are not alone. But try not to push the person next to you down...unless you want your face on the evening news. Remember, in the long scheme of things, it is just a toy.

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Gallagher Charitable Society: Keeping with Tradition

by Peggy McLeish

The Gallagher Charitable Society is an organization on campus that has been developed to help serve the community. The Charitable Society is an effort to bridge the gap between Saint Joseph's College and the surrounding community here in Jasper County. The Charitable Society is a tradition of Gallagher Hall that has been passed down through many years.

The primary effort of the organization is centered around an annual Christmas party. Each year, donations are accepted from various sources such as businesses and alumni. This year the Gallagher Charitable Society also collected donations from students on campus with the "A Buck for a Better Christmas" program.

The money collected then went toward a party devoted to the children of the community who may not otherwise have a privileged Christmas.

The families of the children were invited to come to Saint Joseph's for a lunch and to visit with students and Santa in the ballroom. Gifts were given out to each child by Santa after visiting with him.

This year's Santa Claus was David Menefee, a resident of Gallagher Hall. The organizer of the Gallagher Charitable Society Christmas Party was Duane Marks, who is also a resident of Gallagher Hall.

The party was attended and run by many caring students who came to help and also play with all of the toys. Members of the baseball and football teams, as well as several cheerleaders, also attended the party dressed in their uniforms.



photo by Rachel Hempel

A St. Joe's Christmas...

*It was the night before finals
and all through the hall
not a student was stirring
not even in a stall.*

*Their papers were typed
at the terminals with care
in hopes that Teresa Ping
wouldn't show her face there.*

*The students were tweeked
and drunk in their beds
with visions of kegs
dancing around in their heads.*

*And guys in their boxers
and girls in their jammies
had just passed-out
after a hard night at Sammy's*

*When out on the I.M. field
there arose such a clatter
I stumbled out of bed
to see what was the matter.*

*Over to the window
I swayed like a drunk
stepped onto my roommate
as he let out a grunt.*

*The moon on the breast
of the uncovered grass
reminded me how often
I slept through mass.*

*When, what to my beer
goggled
eyes should appear
The security truck
confiscating all of our beer!*

*With a heavy-set driver
some fat, slow and clumsy*

*I knew in a moment
it must be Reggie!*

*More slower than snails
his followers came
And he whistled and shouted
and called them by name-*

*Now Earnest! Now Barney!
And Ro, oop, too!
And Teresa, write them up
along with you, you, and you!*

*To the top of the dorm
to the top of the stall
Now drive away! Drive Away!
Drive away all!*

*So up the stairway
the coursers they came
all of them panting
with their heads held in shame.*

*All of them were tired
and feeling un-well
until they decided
To drive to Taco-Bell!*

*Reggie climbed in the vehicle
to his team he gave a whistle
Off-campus they drove
like the down of a thistle.*

*But I heard him exclaim
as he drove out of sight
YOU HAVE NO MORE BEER
THAT'S THE END OF YOUR NIGHT!*

*Merry Christmas, St.
Joseph's!!
Bradley Gellers*

Ear Wacks



by Brian Zimmer

Ho, Ho, Ho, Pumas. What a year 1996 turned out to be. Plenty of deaths, plenty of really overrated corporate rock, lots of second-rate copycats, and something like 120% more music releases.

Of course my figures are from publications and news programs that I remember reading or watching during the year, but trust me they are fairly accurate (what the hell! do you expect me to research? I'm not a journalist)

Here is another one I've heard: Last year there were something like 937 alternative rock releases. This year there were some 2,000. Is it really that fertile of a market? Are artists' works really being snatched up as fast as they can make them? Nope, unfortunately the market place is becoming more hostile to new bands.

How about more bad news for music fans? O.k. You know all those releases I was talking about (not counting other sub-groups of alt-rock?) None of them are being purchased! Music sales are in a slump. In fact (more inaccurate figures) I heard, it was something like a 6 year low. More bands, less sales, equals a market implosion, and that cannot be good for anybody.

Call me the breeze or call me the grynh, but it takes a bit over 100,000 units sold to break even with most labels (with the exception of Epitaph Records at 30,000). Very few artists are breaking even and eventually losing label support which is not good for anybody.

Listener loyalty is also extremely low, making bands like Belly, Candlebox, Gin Blossoms, and Cake things of the past before they have

even reacted their creative zeniths. Many refer to this as "disposable music." Ask yourself right now this question: What are my favorite modern bands? They can be Country, Pop, Rock, Metal - whatever. The point is that few people are being completely exposed to a group. Rather they are hearing one song and moving on. Maybe its more the fault of commercial radio, but do they really control our minds that much...? Maybe you should not answer that one!

Another interesting trend to follow is that of return sales, which I should note, are also down. Return sales of an artist are important because it means that you have reached a target audience. Basically, there is no one band that can sell an album on the multi-platinum level on its name anymore. I dare you to find one (don't say Pearl Jam or R.E.M because you are dead wrong - are you threatening me!?)

Could it be that fans of music demand a solid product out of a band or they simply will not buy the album? Maybe, but my contention is that there are no fans around to appreciate music. Another contention of mine is that Rock n' Roll, the holiest of establishments in the U.S., is becoming dangerously stagnant. Maybe, there is too much product and the market is becoming saturated with a few good artists and hundreds of mediocre ones that obscure the good ones. Maybe?

Whatever the case is, know that I am probably correct. Would you expect otherwise? So have a happy holiday season knowing that Rock n' Roll, and the billions of dollars greedily sunk into it (anti-trust violation anybody?) are going to be violently shook to the foundation within a year or so. Just ask MCI who lost their *ss mooching off something they knew nothing about.

Spirited Senior Karey Klott leaves her mark on Saint Joe

by Erin Breetzke

Senior Kareane Klott has had a very successful career at Saint Joseph's College. A positive and active student, Karey has had a great influence upon the school. The cheerleading program has come far due to her effort.

Originally from Kalamazoo, Michigan, Karey is a senior Education major with a minor in Math. Hoping to teach at home in Michigan, she plans to also further her education in graduate school.

"I'd like to teach mild disabilities. When I took 'exceptional children' my junior year, it kind of clicked and was cool. It creates such a challenge," Karey commented.

Her activities such as Alpha Lambda Delta, vice president of education club, vice president of her class sophomore and junior years, Core XI bartender, and working in the Alumni Office for three years, prove that Karey is a leader. This



photo by Rachel Hempel

The squad practices new cheers for the basketball season

"We've always had a lot of support...and we totally appreciate that."

has led to her success in bringing the Saint Joe cheerleading program to life, a program that has brought Karey a great sense of leadership, responsibility, and fun.

"My freshman year [in high school] I tried out because all my friends were

trying out," Karey explained. "I think I had a knack for it," she added. And from there, Karey began to take an interest in cheering.

Only two girls were on the squad when Karey arrived her freshman year at Saint Joseph's, and she quickly undertook the task of being

captain of the cheerleading squad. Under the advisement of band director Robb Thiel, Karey efficiently built up the cheerleading program throughout her years here.

"At first, I just wanted to get people who wanted to be out there cheering to be on the squad, then my sophomore year I wanted to get people who had experience..." she explained. With enough people involved in the program, the squad began to take shape and more funding followed. "We were given a budget [after my freshman year], and we ordered uniforms out of that," she stated. "We paid for our warm-ups on our own, and we paid for our shoes from the clinics we held for the younger kids."

The support the fans and game spectators have shown throughout the years has added to her and her fellow squad members'

cheering spirit. "We've always had a lot of support. The football team has always asked us to be a part of their banquet at the end of each year, and we totally appreciate that," Karey stated.

Because of this growth and support, Karey and the team are currently recruiting another male cheerleader for the squad. This new addition shows the success the team has undergone since Karey arrived on the scene.

"We'd like more male representation and more of the male population involved," Karey explained. "[Having another male on the team] adds strength to the team and makes the stunts look better because the guys have the upper body strength that most of the girls lack," she added.

Even though she graduates this May, Karey still has high hopes for the cheerleading program. "Every year [the program] has gotten better, and hopefully it will just continue to grow and improve," Karey stated.

Women's soccer finishes up best season in history of team

by Kevin Collins

This past season for the women's soccer team was a very fruitful one. They worked extremely hard all year long and put up an impressive record of 23-1-2 overall and 9-0 in the conference. They went farther this year than they ever have in the history of the team and ended up finishing with a national ranking of 3rd for Division II schools.

The ladies seemed rather invincible this season as they were almost never behind, and their only regular season loss was to Truman State University by a score of 2-0. Other than this single loss, the only other team to get close to

beating them was Valparaiso University, whose team was lucky enough to fight for a 0-0 tie.

After closing out the regular season as the Great Lakes Valley Conference Champs, the Lady Pumas continued to roll over teams in the Division II National Tournament. Soon, the ladies found themselves facing a trip to the Division II Final Four in Boca Raton, Florida.

So, at 6:45 AM on the Wednesday prior to Thanksgiving break the ladies boarded a charter bus headed for Indianapolis International Airport. (I was lucky enough to travel with the ladies and will try

to give you an adequate account of what the ladies were up to down south.)

Once the team arrived in Florida, they spent the rest of the evening resting for the next day's practice. The first game of the series was two days away on Friday.

Not without much anxious anticipation, Friday's Semi-final game of the Final Four final came. When the team arrived at the field, they got their first look at their opponents from Franklin Pierce University.

The game got underway, and it became apparent that Franklin Pierce was a team with a lot of talent. They were in control of the play and showed why they had won the past two National titles. (They would

eventually go on to win the 1996 title as well.) The Pumas did not quite manage to score against the formidable competition, and Pierce took the win with a 2-0 score. The reigning champions' experience seemed to make the difference between a Puma victory and the end of the season.

Although their season was over and they came up a little short of the National title, the Saint Joe women's soccer team realized that the season was filled with great accomplishments, as this was the farthest their team had ever been.

Since the season has come to a close, some team members are still being recognized for their efforts. Seven Lady Pumas were selected to the National Soccer Coaches Athletic Association All-Central Regional Team.

These ladies include Jenifer Benedetti, Denise Hutchinson, Rebekah Breech, Carrie Zolper, and Mary Reid, who were selected to the first team. Jessica Beckemeier was selected to the second team, and Mary Beckemeier was selected for Honorable Mention. Breech and Hutchinson have also been selected to the first and Mary Reid selected to the second team of the National Coaches Athletic Association All-American Team.

All-American Witek looks to future in teaching, running

by Jill Peterson

Pursuing her goal to be one of the top ten finishers in the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division II finals for Cross Country, five-time All-American, Laura Witek, is able to say that she placed higher than her own expectations. On November 23, finishing 9th in the nation with a time of 18:28 on the 5000-meter course, she left Humboldt State University in Arcata, California with a sense of accomplishment.

As a senior at Saint Joseph's College, she earned her spot to run in the finals by advancing from regionals in Missouri earlier in the season. The top three individuals and best two teams proceed to the National tournament. Witek noted, "My goal at first was to just make it to Nationals. However, then I wanted more and found the determination to run my hardest in the end."

She attributes part of her success in Cross Country to her preparation in the summer. "I left St. Joseph's on a positive note and wanted to maintain my conditioning in order to come back in good shape for Cross Country," she said. Witek found an athlete from Western Illinois University whom she trained with for an hour once a week. In addition, she ran in road races that assisted her conditioning and training

ventures.

In her running endeavors last spring, Witek was awarded two of her five All-American titles with a 4th place finish in the 3000-meter event and a 6th place finish in the 5000-meter competition. Two of her other titles came from her freshman year. Since then, she has also won All-Academic awards due to carrying a remarkable 3.96 grade point average.

Rewarded with a trophy and her fifth All-American title in Cross Country, the elementary education major is ready to see what she can achieve in the upcoming track and field season. "Looking back to my junior year, I ran as fast as I could," Witek observed. She continued, "This year I have set a goal to try to win a National title. I feel that it is obtainable if everything comes together right."

Witek admits that some of her success is due to her competitiveness and determination, but Coach Bill Massoels is a significant part of her good fortune. "Coach has not only helped me grow as an athlete, but as a person as well. He has made me

realize what I can achieve through personal support, which has led me to believe in myself," Witek said. Massoels agreed to a certain extent, but contested that 90 percent of Laura's success is due to talent, while 10 percent can be attributed to his coaching.

11th, respectively.

Teammate Erin Chapple noted Witek's abilities and leadership on the team. "Laura is an inspiration and leader to the entire team. She pushes everyone to do their best. You would never know that she is an All-American because she never brags and is

the definition of modesty!"

Massoels considers Laura to be the "whole package" of a runner and person. He said, "Laura and I have an unique bond as coach and student-athlete. My biggest compliment that my wife, Teresa, and I can give to

Laura is that we hope our 15-month-old daughter, Samantha, grows up to be as successful as Laura, not necessarily as an athlete, but as a special person in general."

As a matter of fact, Coach Massoels will be training Laura after she graduates. However, Witek never had intentions to run after college, but said that she cannot quit now. "I want to see how far running will take me," she remarked.

In an exploration to see how far her running

capabilities can take her, she plans to train for the Olympics in the year 2000. With a personal best time of 16:46, she is only 31 seconds shy from qualifying for the World Games in the 5000-meter event, meaning that she needs to run the 3.1 miles in 16:15.

As for closer plans for the future, she expects to teach fourth grade near her home in Marengo, Illinois after she gets married on June 28th of this year. Witek would also like to coach track and field at the high school level to give back to running what it has given to her. "Being in the track program has helped my leadership abilities and has improved my self-esteem," she stated.

Freshman Holly Stefaniak, one of Witek's fellow teammates, seemed to sum up Witek's personality and proficiencies the best. "Laura is an exceptional runner and has encouraged and inspired me during the short time I have been here at St. Joseph's College. She is not only a caring and supportive teammate, but also a wonderful friend. Laura is an excellent role model on the track and in the St. Joe community. She is full of determination and because of this, Laura will always be successful in everything she pursues!"



Laura poses for a picture with her team.

Massoels complimented Witek. "Laura epitomizes what we want our program to do. As a fine person who always has a smile on her face and an upbeat attitude, she adds so much to both teams. She is a committed individual; we would not have as strong a program without her."

With Witek's leadership and performance for the past three years, the women's and men's track team have been nationally ranked as high as 9th and

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Under the Clear Blue: Conclusion

by Mike Nichols

They were like dreams, those nights Simon and Cloe spent under the stars after watching the sun set. "The sky's on fire," Simon would whisper each time the light disappeared in one last, fantastic blaze and the world went dark. While the stars and the rest of the universe sparkled down upon them, they wondered what the reality of life truly was. Could it be found in the shape of the clouds? The fall of the rain? Even the immense span of the sky? No, they decided, finally and happily, reality was actually in a night like this: being together, holding hands, watching each other's breath escape to mingle with the night air.

Under their eyes on the horizon, but somehow not seen, were the increasing multitudes of the fighting and the dying. The flashes of rockets, the red of burning fires, and the spinning lights of aircraft hovered in plain sight, yet Simon and Cloe pretended not to see them and never discussed them.

But, as news of brutal fighting and a dire military situation which was forcing more and more young men to be called into service in a desperate attempt to turn a tide of defeat became commonplace, their fragile reality began to feel the weight of a grim and dying world.

"It's gotten colder," Cloe said, shivering slightly as they sat together out in the field. She looked over at Simon, but his eyes were far away. "Simon, what's wrong? You haven't been yourself tonight."

"I have something to tell you," he answered, still far off. He reached into one of his pockets and pulled out an emerald-green insignia, just like the kind given to soldiers upon enlistment. "They called me in today." Simon paused, letting the words sink in, for both of them. "I didn't have a choice."

Cloe turned away for an instant, not knowing what to do or say. Finally, she moved a hand around her neck, removing a necklace that she then pressed into the hand in

which Simon held the insignia. They looked at each other for a long, quiet moment before gazing into the distance at the burning fires.

Months later, Simon began to believe that those nights really had been dreams. As he looked up to the sky, now, from the barren, war-scarred scenery, he was now a part of, he saw the stars and the moon covered by pillars of acrid smoke and outshone by the flames of artillery shells and streaking planes. Here, cowering in holes dug in the ground, wearing a strange uniform covered with soot and the blood of fallen comrades, was his reality now.

Simon remembered hearing, while still in training, that he and the other new "recruits" would be fighting to defend their land and their families against invasion. When he looked around, he knew that these were the same fields he had played in as a child, the same trees he had watched change color, the same sky he had stood under,

first with his father, now with Cloe. But he could no longer recognize them. Now, all was darkness, all was fire, all was blood. Somehow, though, he still clung to Cloe's necklace, still held on to this fragment of what he had known before.

As the sky turned to dusk one day, shells and fireballs began to rain down all around where Simon and his fellow soldiers were dug in. Screams, along with urgent pleas to run for cover, filled the air, but Simon, finding his legs frozen, could only cover his ears and close his eyes. His comrades fled in all directions, some escaping, others being caught in the flames, their bodies fragmenting and blowing away like dust. Suddenly, all was quiet. Simon slowly uncovered his ears and looked up to see that the sky was glowing radiantly with the setting sun. It was almost as if darkness had been cast off and the world had returned to how he'd always remembered it. As his eyes became full of the red, orange, and blue above, he stood up out of his

hiding place, making himself vulnerable, but thinking of anything save the sight he never thought he would see again.

Gunshots rang out in rapid succession. Strangely, Simon saw the holes in his chest form, his blood burst out and away like his breath on a cold night, before he felt his ribs shatter, his heart pierced and stopped, and his brain spin off into blackness.

Moments later, a man in a similar but different uniform with a silver insignia that had "captain" printed on it, was kneeling over Simon's body. The man, whose gun was still smoking from the shots he'd fired, saw that Simon had been holding something in his hand and reached down to pry it out. When he did, he saw a bloodstained necklace with a name printed on it: Cloe.

And the clear blue sky rose and fell overhead, arching up to the top of the world, touching the edges of space before dropping down to the end of the horizon, and beyond.

"To Boldly Go Where No One Has Gone Before"

By Roger Burns

During Thanksgiving break I had the good fortune to be able to see the latest Star Trek film; *Star Trek: First Contact*. Those of you who saw the last Star Trek film, *Star Trek: Generations* might have been as disappointed with it as I was. The main problem with the movie was the shameless effort to give Captain James T. Kirk, played by William Shatner, a valuable part in the film yet still keep The Next Generation (TNG) aspect. Other things that let some TNG fans down was the sudden and not well explained decision that the android Data, played by Brent Spiner, made to put in his

emotion chip. This decision changed a character who barely changed throughout seven seasons. Fans were also upset with the portrayal of Captain Jean-Luc Picard, played by Patrick Stewart, as a wimp just to make Kirk more of a hero.

As a result of the failure of *Generations*, Paramount found themselves facing the prospect of not making another Trek film. Paramount decided to go ahead and make one more try at reviving interest in Trek films and gave the O.K. for the production of *First Contact*. In order to make *First Contact* the blockbuster that was needed they wanted to make it a

movie that even Non-Trekkies would want to watch, yet still make it something that Trekkies would be proud of.

Since the Borg had always been the most menacing foes in TNG they were brought back for the new movie. The Borg are the Federation's most dangerous enemies, and TNG television series had three of its most successful episodes using the Borg characters. The dramatic side of the film was Picard's inner struggle with his loyalties to the Federation and his crew, while helping his close friend Data.

In order to attract non-Trekkie audiences director

Jonathan Frakes, who also plays Commander William Riker, wanted to provide the feature with a strong action adventure edge, topped off with excellent special effects. To keep audiences on the edge of their seats, he tried to take an *ALIENS* type approach to the movie.

Die hard Trekkies will find

many inside jokes throughout the movie as well as references to all four series. I could tell you what the references are but I don't want to ruin the surprise. All in all, I believe that *First Contact* might be the best Trek movie since *The Wrath of Khan* and it is definitely a very entertaining film for anyone.

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